

Dermot Moran

"The Destruction of the
Destruction: Heidegger's
Versions of the History
of Philosophy"

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Martin Heidegger
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Acknowledgments

The colloquium, *Art, Politics, Technology—Martin Heidegger 1889–1989*, held at Yale University, attempted to confront what remains both disturbing and challenging in a thinking darkened by National Socialism. Scholars from both sides of the Atlantic came together, presented and discussed often conflicting assessments of Heidegger's significance and complicity. The present volume preserves something of the substance and spirit of this encounter.

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14. For the relation between Hölderlin's poetry and politics, see Gerhard Kurz's *Mittelbarkeit und Vereinigung—zum Verhältnis von Poesie, Reflexion und Revolution bei Hölderlin* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1975).
15. From the estate of Karl Jaspers located in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach. Cited in Ott, *Martin Heidegger*, p. 131.

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THE DESTRUCTION OF THE DESTRUCTION: Heidegger's Versions of the History of Philosophy

D e r m o t M o r a n

In *Being and Time* (1927) Heidegger proposed a destruction (*Destruktion*) of the history of philosophy as an integral part of his phenomenological ontology. Despite the obvious importance of this concept of "destruction," Heidegger never submits it to systematic critique; on the other hand he never revokes or revises the notion in his later writings. It remains something unthought in his thinking. Yet, given the importance that the term would play in the formation of the movement of deconstruction, the term itself obviously requires an extensive elaboration and critique. Indeed, in keeping with Heidegger's own view of the responsibilities of founders and of great thinkers regarding the purity of their originary thought, we cannot absolve Heidegger from the implied responsibility to give us a pure reading of his own foundational concepts, and to protect them from distortion or contamination.

Heidegger's impact on contemporary philosophy is in part associated

with his acute awareness of the historical and metaphysical traces which every philosophical term brings with it, yet his treatment of philosophical terms varies in radical and seemingly arbitrary ways. Some terms—especially philosophemes such as *ousia*, *phusis*, *alētheia*, *substantia*, *essentia*, *Wesen*, *Grund*—receive detailed critical treatment, often including a speculative etymological analysis or reconstruction; other terms are carefully announced as technical terms and yet receive no analysis or deconstruction. This is curious and appears to be a flaw in Heidegger's "methodology" (if we may be permitted to use the term as Heidegger himself is vigorously "against method").¹ The concept of "destruction" has of course been popularized by the contemporary philosophical and literary critical movement known as "deconstruction," and frequently commentators have acted as if Heidegger's concept is the same as or similar to the term inaugurated by Derrida. Yet the two terms are by no means identical and it will be necessary in the course of this paper to disentangle the strands of meaning and of influence. Derrida himself has acknowledged the role of Heidegger's concept in the formation of his own procedure known as "deconstruction."² But more importantly for our purposes, in terms of Heidegger's own conception of origin and futurity, Heidegger's introduction of the term must be held in some measure responsible for its later development, since according to Heidegger's own reasoning, origin contains all the "essential possibilities" of later meaningfulness. Thus Heidegger himself is—on his own terms—responsible for the manner in which the essential meaning of the term gets reinterpreted and appropriated.³ The origin (*Ursprung*) of the concept already contains its later history, its aftereffect (*Nachwirkung*). There is therefore a clear requirement that the term *Destruktion* itself be examined and questioned. Since destruction, for Heidegger, involves historical reworking and rereading, it will be beneficial to reread parts of the history of philosophy, to search for the forerunner of Heidegger's own conception.⁴

Toward the end of the eleventh century in Baghdad, a Muslim philosopher, Ghazali (1059–1111), who was drawn toward Sufism, wrote a work entitled *Tahafut al-falasifa*, which received, in its medieval Latin translation, the title *Destructio philosophorum*, "the destruction of the philosophers." Modern editors say that the word *Tahafut* can be translated in different ways, but is more accurately rendered as "breakdown, disintegration or incoherence."⁵ The title then, most accurately, is the "incoherence of philosophy." It was, however, in the Latin version that the book entered into philosophy in northern Europe during the high Middle Ages. Thus the term *destructio* as a philosophical term itself emerges from the misreading of a medieval Arabic term.

The *Destructio philosophorum* is a polemic against the claim of philosophy to be a certain demonstrative science, and a defense of the Islamic

faith. Ghazali attacks all philosophers by attacking Aristotle because, he reasons, Aristotle himself had refuted all the other philosophers, including Plato.⁶ In Ghazali's view, all philosophies lack certainty and are based merely upon opinion. If metaphysics were to have the certainty of mathematics, for example, then it could not be wrong, but, unfortunately, philosophy fails to live up to its claim to be science.⁷ Truth, then, is found in faith not in philosophy. Ghazali then goes on to examine a list of twenty points where the philosophers in their arrogance claim to know better than the religious authorities—including the arguments in favor of the eternity of the world, the nature of the divine attributes (especially God's ability to know particulars), the incorporeal, immortal nature of the soul, the possibility of bodily resurrection, and so on. Ghazali's *destructio* here does not mean the abandonment of philosophy for faith. Rather, *destructio* is the criticism of reasonably reached opinion when it overreaches itself and claims a totalizing demonstrative scientific certainty. Ghazali has not abandoned philosophy. In fact, ironically—or should I say inevitably—he is drawn to make use of philosophical arguments against the philosopher. Thus Ghazali himself unapologetically makes use of the Christian philosopher John Philoponus to correct the arguments of the Aristotelians (or, to be more accurate, the version of Aristotle as interpreted by Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina [Avicenna]) on the possibility of an eternal creation.⁸ We can see the web of textual interpretation that is implicit in this destruction. *Destructio* then, as it appears in its medieval form, is the attempt to situate philosophical claims in relation to revealed truth, using the arguments of philosophy itself. Destruction is already operating as critique within the region of philosophy, a clearing of the ground already opened up by philosophical questioning.

Soon after Ghazali, the greatest commentator on Aristotle, Ibn Roshd (Averroës), whom Aquinas merely refers to as "the Commentator," wrote a defense of the nature of philosophy, the *Tahafut al-tahafut* (literally: "incoherence of the incoherence" or, in its medieval Latin translation, *Destructio destructionis*, "destruction of the destruction") in which he refutes Ghazali point by point. Averroës, not denying faith, goes on to restore philosophy to its proper place as rational investigation. This he does through a destruction of the arguments Ghazali (borrowing from philosophy) had raised against philosophy. Again, the destruction of the destruction is tied to hermeneutical reinterpretation of tradition; again, it does not take place outside philosophy but within it; again, what is at stake is the truth of reason and of revelation. Here the concept of destruction is tied to the discovery of essential truth, but the parameters are those of faith and reason.

I have introduced the idea of the destruction of the destruction, not merely as a *conceit*, a rhetorical conceit, but as evidence of the prehistory and the provenance (*Herkunft*) of the technique of destruction made

famous in Heidegger's *Being and Time*.⁹ Not only do we have an interpretative technique named in the course of philosophical tradition, but we also have its self-reflexive turning against itself, we have a concept that by invoking itself invites its other, the destruction of the destruction. Heidegger was presumably unaware of the *Vorgeschichte* of his own term *Destruktion*; nevertheless, in terms of his own very conception of hermeneutics as the recovery of the *essential possibility* that lies hidden in the presence of what has happened, it is not wrong to hear Heidegger's term as echoing, resonating, recovering, these medieval meanings. It is not important in the Heideggerian scheme of reading that the author (Heidegger) himself be aware of the traditional resonances of the term that he introduces. For Heidegger, the author (who is "authentic") is only able to articulate the text that is "sent" by the history of Being, his own personal sensitivity is a secondary matter.¹⁰ Even if we adopt a more "textual" approach to the history of philosophy, then the term "destruction" already carries with it reference to the other texts in which its meaning is rooted.

It is curious that Heidegger does not make use of any Greek terms for destruction, terms that would have indicated the historical provenance of this method of ontology, this method that thinks against itself. Clearly destruction grows out from the old ontology and in order to understand its mechanisms and structure Heidegger would have done well to see how it operated in earlier texts. There is a wide range of Greek terms signifying destruction: *kathairēsis*, "taking down, dismantling," *anairēsis*, "abolishing, taking away" (including removal for burial), *anastasis*, laying waste, *katalusis*, "dissolution, dissolving, destruction"; terms that convey some of the meanings Heidegger intends. In fact, the verb *apolumi*, which conveys a strong notion of destruction, had already been used by Plato in connection with the behavior of the Sophists in the dialogue *Euthydemus*. The two Sophists are experts in arms, in wrestling, and in "wordy warfare" (272a), which is the art of debating by the utter routing of the opponent. In teaching the young man, Clinias, the Sophists want to say that his former state of ignorance is destroyed (283d). Socrates, too, is interested in the game of destroying the ignorant and the bad and replacing it with the wise and the good:

My dear Ctesippus, I think we ought to accept from our visitors what they tell us, if they are kind enough to do us this favor, and we shall not quarrel over a word [*mē onomati diapheresthai*]. If they understand how to destroy men so as to make good and sensible ones out of bad and foolish ones, whether this be their own invention, or they learned from someone else a kind of death or destruction such that they can destroy a bad one and produce a good one instead: if they understand this—and it is clear they do understand it; at least they said that their art newly discovered was to make good men out of bad—let us give them leave; let them destroy the bad and make him sensible,

and all the rest of us too! But if you young ones are afraid, make the experiment on me, as your Carian slave; I am only an old man, so I am ready to run the risk, and I deliver myself to Dionysodorus here as if he were Medea of Colchis. Let him destroy me [*apolluto me*], boil me too if he likes, only let him turn me out good. (285a–c)¹¹

This passage is fascinating: destruction is an art (*tekhnē*), whether invented by the Sophists or learned by them. It turns bad into good by destroying. It has—at least in the reporting of Socrates—an ethical intention. If we follow the Sophistic model of destruction in Plato, then destruction is indeed primary, it is a kind of production or creation, bringing about the new. For the Sophists, we must destroy before we can create. Hence the puzzlement in the text over the provenance of the concept—is it itself something newly discovered, in which case it has an absolute originality? Or did the Sophists learn from someone else this "kind of death or destruction"? Destruction is both death and origin of life in this text. Destruction is tied to speaking, and indeed, for the Sophists, it is tied to the impossibility of saying what is not. The Sophists have no difficulty with this, because they have abjured temporality by living totally in the present (287b). Socrates on the other hand follows Mnemosyne (275c). Learning, for Socrates, is remembering; for the Sophists, it is destroying. Destruction is tied to learning by forgetting, by overcoming. In this text of Plato, there is built into the act of destruction an overcoming of time that neither Heidegger nor Derrida articulate in their versions. Destruction, for the Sophists, presupposes an earlier established time that must be effaced, for Plato the whole point is the regaining of this absolute origin and the reestablishment of the unity of the beginning.

Given these appearances of the concept of destruction in Plato and in medieval texts, we must ask what is the status of the Heideggerian term. Is *Destruktion* a Heideggerian *Urwort*? In the Freiburg lecture series of 1929–30, published as *The Basic Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger denies that metaphysics is an *Urwort*; but that for Heidegger has nothing to do with the lateness of its appearing in the history of the transmission of the Aristotelian text.¹² An *Urwort* need not be historically first or early. It may indeed be late in appearing. But an *Urwort* grounds other kinds of saying. Could *Destruktion* be an *Urwort* in those terms? Who picks such an essential word? For Heidegger it is the unique thinker and poet, others who use it are involved in repetition. Are the Sophists then the creators of this term? If so, *Destruktion* would lose some of the "positive" characteristics that Heidegger insists on. It is clear that Heidegger has not thought out the inner meaning of the term *Destruktion*. We shall return to this problem.

Let us turn now to Heidegger's articulation of the "essential possibility" of philosophy itself. For our purposes what is at issue here is not

Heidegger's general theses about the history of philosophy and how this regional history stands as a mirror of the history of Being itself and its having been gradually forgotten. Rather, what is at stake is Heidegger's "mode of access" (*Zugangsart*) to the phenomenon of philosophy, his reshaping of the subject understood as the history of philosophy, and his own self-orientation with regard to philosophy.¹³ This means taking seriously the Heideggerian phenomenological program as articulated in *Being and Time*. Here the motif of destruction is fundamental, and it continues through his life's writings although not always using the same terminology. By specifying that philosophy in its historical development cannot not be other than it is, Heidegger is reducing the possibility of there being a genuine recovery or reappropriation of philosophy. How then will a rethinking of philosophy be possible?¹⁴

Some of the terms seem to be clear: the term "philosophy" itself, for instance, although it could be asked by what right Heidegger is allowed to reinterpret univocally a traditional and possibly analogical term? Heidegger talks of "ontology" in 1927, but in his lectures published as *Die Grundprobleme* he equates ontology with philosophy as such and he never afterward deviates from this position. Despite his neo-Kantian beginnings, he is sublimely uninterested in epistemology, ethics, and other traditional branches of philosophy. Indeed, he is against this entire architectonic of philosophy as is made clear in the *Kantbuch*. Later, in the essay "The End of Philosophy" for example, he will say that philosophy is metaphysics, denying the possibility that philosophy has ever been other than what its present direction inclines it to be, denying that anything else of the essential possibility of philosophy has been realized, or perhaps going further and saying that philosophy is bound by the necessity inherent in its mode of appearing to be nothing other than metaphysics. Thus in the 1943 lecture published as the essay "Nietzsches Wort 'Gott ist tot'" ("The Word of Nietzsche: 'God Is Dead'") in *Holzwege*, Heidegger says that "through Nietzsche metaphysics has in a certain sense divested itself of its own essential possibility, other possibilities of metaphysics can no longer appear. Through the overturning [*Umkehrung*] of metaphysics accomplished by Nietzsche, there remains for metaphysics nothing but a turning aside into its own inessentiality and disarray."¹⁵ Metaphysics, Heidegger says, should be thought of as "the truth of what is as such in its entirety, and not as the doctrine of any particular thinker."¹⁶ In the *Kantbuch* Heidegger writes: "Metaphysics is not something that is simply 'created' by man in systems and doctrines, rather the comprehension of Being, its projection and rejection, takes place in *Dasein* as such."¹⁷ In the earlier Heidegger, metaphysics is thought of as a fundamental human structure; later it becomes the name for the "happening" of Being itself. Note that Heidegger in the *Kantbuch*

includes "rejection" of metaphysics (another form of destruction?) in this essential human structuring.

More problematically, in a quasi-Hegelian manner, Heidegger appears to equate movement in philosophy with movement in history and society generally. Philosophy is the way Being itself appears, it is the "thinking saying" of Being. Metaphysics is for Heidegger the irruption of human essence into the world. Metaphysics is not just a human science, still less a collection of conflicting opinions about reality, it is the manifestation of what is as it appears historically in and through human nature. Metaphysics is a mirror whereby we can look into and see what is behind us, and paradoxically, by examining what is behind us we can learn what is coming. Only within this overall conception of philosophy does the concept of destruction take on significance.

Leaving aside for a moment the enormity of this claim about the meaning of "philosophy" (equals metaphysics equals appearing of Being), let us look at the meaning of the problematic term "history" (*Geschichte*) for Heidegger. We know that around 1917 the tension between systematics and history led Heidegger to abandon the neo-Kantianism of Rickert and move toward a phenomenological hermeneutics informed by Husserl and Dilthey.¹⁸ We know that Heidegger quickly became dissatisfied with philosophy as the history of the worldviews (*Weltanschauungsgeschichte*) and with the anthropomorphic understanding of historicity in Dilthey which could lead only to historicism and relativism. How can there be history without relativity? How can history yield knowledge of being?¹⁹

Indeed there are few terms more difficult to unravel in Heidegger than the concept of history—whether it is in the earlier formulations influenced by Hegel²⁰ and Nietzsche of *Geschichte* and *Historie*; or in the use of the verb *geschehen*; or in the concepts of *Geschick* (destiny), *Schicksal* (fate), or in the later formulations of *Ereignis*, or the sending (*schicken*) or receiving of Being (as in "Metaphysics as History of Being," *N II*). From Rickert Heidegger took to seeing epochs in terms of value-determination, as is evident in the *Habilitationsschrift*. Heidegger never abandoned talking of epochs, although in later years he took to interpreting epoch not so much as era but as *Ansichhalten*, a holding-to-itself, from the Greek, *epokhē*. This talk of epochs has been much criticized, not least by Derrida, who, however, also likes to speak of epochs. How is an epoch determined? What gives an epoch its horizon? For Heidegger epoch is linked to philosophy as the revealing of Being. In the early Heidegger, philosophy reveals the manner in which time unrolls as history; in the later Heidegger, philosophy's unraveling is a sending from time itself. The problem is that in both the early and the later formulations, the very notion of philosophy's history is extremely reified.

Heidegger accepts the traditional canon of philosophical history from

Plato and Aristotle to Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche, which had already been established through the work of German academic historians of philosophy. The only divergence is his inclusion of Eckhart and Hölderlin as great thinkers, but even here, Heidegger is guided by German academic history. Dilthey, and Cassirer before him, had already legitimized discussion of Hölderlin as a philosopher; and Eckhart was a rising star from 1916 onward. Despite the publication of editions of the works of Nicholas of Cusa in the 1920s, Heidegger never alludes to this important thinker. Thus, Heidegger straightforwardly accepts the neo-Kantian writing of the history of philosophy, just as Hegel before him had accepted Jacob Brucker and other classic historians.²¹ Heidegger has a serious methodological problem here. Using his own terminological distinction between *existentiell* and *existential* (or the distinction between ontic and ontological) we might say that Heidegger accepts blindly the empirical, *existentiell* facts of the given written history, which is in quite banal terms the received account, and yet makes it the basis for his own transcendental, *existential* exploration of the historicity (or historicity) of human nature and of the happening of Being itself. History of philosophy means, for Heidegger, not chronological happenings, but a set of contemporaneous texts laid out as on a library shelf, each naming an author and hence a region or epoch or temporalized meaning of Being. But surely this is the opposite of true historical thinking, of the appreciation of historical difference. Speaking purely from the standpoint of *immanente Kritik* (Heidegger's own term, later adopted by Adorno), has not Heidegger severely compromised himself by basing his transcendental turn on a "deficient mode" of written history itself? Has Heidegger not been blind to his own *Zugangsart*, his own mode of access to the phenomena known collectively as the history of philosophy? Of course this accusation has been made before, especially in relation to Heidegger's selective appropriation of the texts of Hölderlin. In a seminar given in Zurich, November 6, 1951, Heidegger defends the use of an uncritical secondary source, Jacob Burckhardt's *History of Greek Civilization*, because it thinks greatly, and whoever thinks greatly will err greatly.²² Here Heidegger admits that a book not based on primary textual material can give insights into that primary material. Similarly, we must assume that his rethinking of the history of philosophy takes place within the received account of that history, making his *Destruktion* much less radical than he claimed it to be.

It is not so much a question of his being misled by empirical errors of fact about philosophers, but of the manner in which the impoverished factual basis can disturb and distort the concepts emerging from it. The concept of history as process, like the unveiling of the meaning of Being itself, cannot be grasped if all there is to work on is the traditional linear view of the development of philosophy, and its division into "epochs"

along standard lines. How can Heidegger's serious, if outrageous, claim concerning the necessity of philosophy's self-revelation as metaphysics stand on such a narrow empirical base? Whatever the subtlety of Heidegger's handling of the historicity of other concepts, the concept of historicity itself is not adequately grounded, and is itself in need of the destruction prescribed for ontology. While Heidegger is correct to say that the unexamined concept of time functions in the formation of Greek concepts of being, Heidegger's own time concepts have not themselves "had their birth certificates displayed" (SZ 22). Heidegger's own analysis must be seen as having the possibility of being either authentic or inauthentic. His rhetoric of doing violence to the text leads to a violence against the richness of history as the multiplicity of what has been recorded as happening. Philosophers such as Plotinus, Proclus, Nicholas of Cusa, and others are simply abandoned in Heidegger's version of historical development. Hegel at least attempted to be comprehensive. Heidegger's comprehensiveness lies in the universality of his transcendental claims rather than in his encompassing of the varied fields of philosophy.

Let us return again to the concept of destruction. How does it emerge in Heidegger's writing? The term *Destruktion* appears early in Heidegger's development. In a letter written to Karl Löwith in 1920 (but not published until 1946) Heidegger refers to the need—not to "save culture"—but for a *Destruktion*, which living in the present upheaval (*Umsturz*) will either result in a new "culture" or else in ruin.²³ The term also appears in Heidegger's review of Jasper's *Psychology of World Views* written about 1919–21. In this text, reprinted in *Wegmarken*, Heidegger refers to a "geistgeschichtliche Destruktion des Überlieferten," underscored in an affirmative sense.²⁴ According to Löwith, the term carries with it resonances from the post-1918 situation in Germany, specifically related to the concept of the destruction of culture in Spengler's immensely popular *Decline of the West* to which Heidegger refers in his 1920–21 lectures on the phenomenology of religion.²⁵ As Gadamer points out, Heidegger's appeal to a younger generation in the 1920s was because his "questions were also the urgent questions of an agitated crippled generation, shaken in its cultural pride by the devastating battles of World War I."²⁶ According to Barash, in Heidegger's lectures on the phenomenology of religion the term *Destruktion* does not appear, but Heidegger does talk about the need to burst (*sprengen*) the categories of Western thought.²⁷

No doubt the term came to Heidegger already resonant of Nietzsche's *Umkehrung*, overturning, overcoming. It must be related to Nietzsche's philosophizing with a hammer, with his dictum: "whatever is falling, give it a push." Later it would become linked in Heidegger's thinking with Hegel's declaration of an end to philosophy.²⁸ In *Being and Time* the term

is introduced as a new word. Yet as Barthes has pointed out about the rhetoric of revolutions, the rhetoric is old. As we have seen, the concept of destruction had already appeared in Western philosophy, yet Heidegger appears to be blind to the provenance of the word, which includes the destruction of philosophers by a mentality guided by faith, something Heidegger himself admitted would cause him to close up his shop. But it is also the destruction or refutation of philosophy by the arguments of philosophy (already in Plato's *Euthydemus* and in Ghazali). Ghazali had argued that Aristotle had destroyed the other philosophers; Averroës used philosophy to destroy the destruction of philosophy. Heidegger's specific shift of meaning is to link destruction inexorably with hermeneutics and with phenomenology.

Even in Heidegger's early cooperative attempts with Husserl there are shades of a notion of destruction. For example, in Heidegger's redrafting of Husserl's sketch for the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (14th edition) article on phenomenology written in 1922, Heidegger closely associates the turning around of attention in phenomenology (*die Umwendung des Blickes; Blickuwendung*) with a methodological retracement (here: *die methodische Zurückführung*) which "overcomes the vague generality and vacuity of traditional philosophizing."²⁹ Here philosophy is seen to take a transcendental turn back to consciousness and its intentional structures, in order to ground all sciences of things including the psychological sciences. Turning back is made methodological by reduction.³⁰ In this draft Heidegger is writing within Husserl's assumption of the primacy of consciousness and the ability to gain access to the eidetic. Reduction is a leading back, but also one that breaks through our everyday understanding of things.

In the 1927 Marburg lecture course published as *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (*The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*) Heidegger states explicitly that philosophy makes use of phenomenology as a method and that phenomenology involves *Reduktion*. But now he acknowledges that he is departing from Husserl in the meaning of reduction, although he retains the word.³¹ Reduction for Heidegger means leading attention back from a being to the meaning of the Being of that being. When a being is measured against the meaning of Being, Heidegger sees a construction involved. He links a destruction with this construction as two inseparable movements in phenomenology. The reduction-construction of the phenomenon (a reinterpretation of Husserl's concept of "constitution") must be balanced by a destruction that points up the historicity of the concepts.³² The destruction is necessary because too often the being is measured not against an original understanding of the meaning of Being (whatever that might be for Heidegger) but against a "common or average concept of Being."³³ It is because ontology is historical and determined by inherited concepts that it requires a

destructive constituent in its method. Destruction is seen here as a reduction of concepts from their tradition-bound contexts back to their original sources.³⁴ In the *Basic Problems* Heidegger talks of a critical dismantling (*kritischer Abbau*) of concepts. Again, this for him is neither negative nor condemnatory: "it signifies precisely a positive appropriation of tradition."³⁵ In contrast to Husserl, the history of philosophy now becomes integral to philosophical understanding itself. Phenomenology engages with historicity. The term *Abbau* also appears in Husserl's late text, *Experience and Judgment* (1938), and is similar to reduction, meaning a return to originary experience from under layers of sedimented interpreted experience.³⁶ Destruction is required where reflection, particularly philosophical reflection, is unavailable or impossible. Destruction in particular will lead to the roots of the transcendental constitution of both the subjective and objective worlds. For Husserl *Abbau* will dismantle the idealizations that cover up the originary life-world.³⁷

In *Being and Time* Heidegger expands on the notion of destruction, but this time without linking it specifically to phenomenological reduction. Now it functions to concretize thinking, and remove it from a kind of scholastic abstraction and reification. He uses various terms—the nouns *Destruktion*, *Abbau*, *Zerstörung*, or the verb *zerstören*. It is noteworthy (and somewhat disturbing, given Heidegger's overall view of the metaphysical problems inherent in Latin as a philosophical language) that with *Destruktion* he chose a word with Latin roots—unconsciously gathering the already established philosophical authority of the word but nevertheless using a tool of the Latin mind to disestablish (a good word in the English language) the manner in which the edifice of Greek ontology had been erected by rationalist philosophers from Descartes through Kant to Hegel and Nietzsche. The Latin word *destruere* was used in the first instance with reference to buildings and meant "to take down," the opposite of "to make a dwelling" construction, *aedificare*.³⁸ The dwelling place of philosophy was to be torn down. Tearing down is a secondary activity, it must come temporally after the building-up, the construction, the activity of building (*bauen*). Indeed in the later writings of Heidegger, the activity of destruction is replaced by the notion of returning, of homecoming (*Heimkunft*).

In related formulations Heidegger calls for a step backward or return (*Schritt zurück, Rückgang, Verwindung, Überwindung, Umkehr, Wiederkehr*).³⁹ In *The Question Concerning Technology* it is the "painstaking effort to think through still more primarily what was primally thought . . . not reviving the past, but rather the sober readiness to be astounded before the coming of what is early."⁴⁰ In 1929 Heidegger makes use of the stronger Germanic word *Zerstörung* to indicate the radical project of dismantling Western metaphysics, in his debate with Cassirer in Davos.⁴¹ Heidegger in later years operates with different models of destruction, including

the crossing out (*die kreuzweise Durchstreichung*) of *Zur Seinsfrage* which is taken up by Derrida.⁴² Again of course, these crossed lines are for Heidegger “not merely a negative sign” (*kein bloss negatives Zeichen*), rather it is a gathering (*Versammlung*). Destruction as crossing out still emphasises that what is crossed out has not been put out of play but is rather being rethought in a new context.

Heidegger typically emphasises only the “positive tendencies” (*positive Tendenz*, SZ 23) of destruction. In fact Heidegger generally uses technical words for their positive significance alone. It is one of his typical phenomenological moves to introduce a term and then deny that the term has a derogatory or negative meaning. For example, in *Zur Sache des Denkens* (*On Time and Being*) he says that *Ende* as in the “end of philosophy” is not to be understood in a negative sense (*negative Sinn*), rather it means fulfilment (*Vollendung*), consummation, gathering into completion, conclusion (*Versammlung*).⁴³ Heidegger fetishizes the affirmative, so that negative phenomena are always merely “deficient modes” of affirmative phenomena, if they are not in themselves concealing affirmative phenomena. To say that Heidegger fetishizes the affirmative is not to say that he is in favor of affirmative utterance, as expression, *Aussage*. Simple declaratory utterance is never for Heidegger the proper vehicle for philosophical understanding. Derrida also believed that one of the pressures that led him to deconstruction was dissatisfaction with the thesis, with “the very idea of thetic presentation, of positional or oppositional logic, the idea of position, *Setzung* or *Stellung*, the epoch of the thesis.”⁴⁴ Derrida too denies that the meaning of deconstruction has in it anything negative.⁴⁵ “Deconstruction certainly entails a moment of affirmation. Indeed, I cannot conceive of a radical critique which would not be motivated by some sort of affirmation, acknowledged or not.”⁴⁶

In the *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, having distinguished construction and destruction, Heidegger stresses their mutual belonging together. In philosophy, construction is destruction—a positive appropriation of tradition. “Because destruction belongs to construction, philosophical cognition is essentially, at the same time, in a certain sense, historical cognition.”⁴⁷ Destruction, then, is a corrective to normal historical method, even though, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger expounds it methodically, and does not question the account of history in which it is operating. Heidegger sees destruction largely as a hermeneutic project, a project of inquiry, where questioning is the basic tool, indeed is much more than a tool since the question is the primary ontological phenomenon as well as the mode of access to itself. There is a certain truth in the argument of some transcendental thinkers (such as Emil Coreth) that Heidegger had found in the question a self-validating ontological phenomenon. In *Being and Time* the methodical meaning (*der methodische Sinn*) of phenomenology is said to be interpretive exposition,

Auslegung.⁴⁸ But interpretation for Heidegger involves questioning, just as in later years Heidegger will say that questioning is the piety of thinking. In the introductions to *Being and Time* Heidegger finds a phenomenon that provides both the “object” (the thing itself) to be studied and also the means of study. The phenomenon under investigation is not Being (which is forgotten), but the question of Being, which also puts in question the mode of being of the questioner. The self-questioning question operates in a manner similar to the *cogito* (though Heidegger would deny the link) in that it grounds all further systematic inquiry. The difference is that Heidegger makes clear that the result is not a new answer but a radical transformation of the point of view of the questioner. The answer is not a “proposition that is blind and isolated [*in einem isolierten und blinden Satz*],” nor is it a “free-floating result [*freischwebendes Resultat*],” nor is it merely a new point of view (*Standpunkt*) added to or replacing the old one.⁴⁹ The aim is to give an orientation where what is ancient appears new enough to be worked with, in other words that the still living possibilities of the tradition be laid bare.

The goal—at least in *Being and Time*—is the placing of ontology on a new footing, but one that will yield a permanent basis! The clear analogy with Kant's project of a certain and teachable grounded metaphysics is unavoidable to us as readers. But even more, there appears to be a direct parallel with the language of Descartes in the *Principles*. Heidegger's ploy is to locate the “new science” of phenomenological ontology on the transcendental ground of that being who by generating the philosophical tradition has also given rise to the “densities of its inquiries, its findings, its failures [*die Geschehnisse ihres Fragens, Findens und Versagens*],” namely *Dasein*.⁵⁰ Did Heidegger assume that his radical new beginning, his sweeping away of the various towers of Babel, would lead to a secure and certain place for ontology, safe from all future scepticisms and confusions? Was there an announced end to the *Gigantomachia*, the battle of the giants over what is?⁵¹ It seems odd that Heidegger does not see that his own transcendental language possesses an absoluteness and permanence that radically undercuts his attempt to think the temporal and the historical in human existence in a mode proper to that temporality and historicity.

Heidegger's central criticism of Husserl's phenomenology—apart from his rejection of the transcendental ego—appears to be that Husserl assumed that transcendental phenomenology would uncover one universal mode of access to beings, achieved through reduction, initiated by suspending the “natural attitude.” Heidegger realized that the mode of access to any phenomenon is itself temporally conditioned, due to the fact that *Dasein* is historical and that Being is temporal. Heidegger repeats in both 1925 and 1927 that we should never assume that all phe-

nomena have the same access roads leading to them. Each phenomenon provides an access road in its own right, dependent on the openness of history's manifestation of the phenomenon. Yet Heidegger, despite this recognition of historical diversity, never acknowledges or allows the possibility of relativism. Even in his later writings, the mode of Being's withholding is never justification for relativism, for what he calls in *Being and Time* "eine schlechte Relativierung."⁵² To counter relativism, one must have an account of temporality that allows for the possibility of scientific knowledge of the temporally shifting phenomenon. For this reason Heidegger sees that phenomenology must place time as its guiding horizon, and must abandon any univocal rendering of phenomena. This requires that there be as many phenomenologies as there are phenomena, or else that phenomenology be other than a method. Toward the end of the *Basic Problems* Heidegger speaks of the fact that there is a kind of melting away of method when we genuinely approach the phenomenon with the proper access:

There is no such thing as the one phenomenology, and if there could be such a thing it would never become anything like a philosophical technique. For implicit in the essential nature of all genuine method as a path towards the disclosure of objects is the tendency to order itself always towards that which it itself discloses. When a method is genuine and provides access to the objects, it is precisely then that the progress made by following it and the growing originality of the disclosure will cause the very method that was used to become necessarily obsolete. The only thing that is truly new in science and in philosophy is the genuine questioning and struggle with things which is at the service of this questioning.⁵³

In *Being and Time* Heidegger argues that traditional ontologists from Plato to Hegel were misled by employing an "average" concept of Being when measuring the being of the soul, of the subject and so on. They were not equipped to grasp the true diversity of Being (Heidegger may have got his insight into the diversity of Being from Aristotle or more likely from Scotus and Aquinas). This diversity of Being stems in part from the modes of access that Being allows to beings. How can we grasp the modes of access? In *Being and Time* entities must show themselves "with the kind of access that genuinely belongs to them [in der ihm genuin zugehörigen Zugangsart]."⁵⁴ Heidegger talks of the need for a genuine, authentic analysis (*die eigentliche Analytik*, SZ 37).⁵⁵ In other words, not merely is the phenomenon to be disclosed in its authentic or inauthentic nature, but the analysis is also capable of being authentic or inauthentic, can belong to *das Man*, or can give genuine access. In all genuine analysis, the analysis must be secured, according to Heidegger, in terms of the exemplary phenomenon that serves as its point of departure (*Ausgang*, SZ 36), its carrying through (*Durchgang*) and the mode of access (*Zu-*

gang).⁵⁶ Phenomenology must make a passage from the exemplary phenomenon through what is covered up to gain genuine access. How is genuine access possible if time and history conspire against the possibility of us having a proper view of the phenomenon? How can there be access if the epoch as holding-to-itself (*Ansichhalten*) intervenes? In the *Basic Problems* Heidegger declares: "because Dasein is historical . . . possibilities of access and modes of interpretation are themselves diverse, varying in different historical circumstances."⁵⁷ The mode of access was to be clarified through destruction, not just destroying dried-up tradition, but uprooting the epoch-making nature of the epoch itself, that which withholds our access. It is through rethinking the nature of the epoch that the unfolding of history's modes of access to phenomena would come to be rethought. Instead, however, Heidegger remained unable to think through the nature of the epoch and of historical happening, and instead interposed a concept with pseudoreligious connotations of grace and advent: *Ereignis*. This proposing of a lawless occurrence that happens from out of the darkness of its own temporalizing is hardly an explanatory concept upon which to base the understanding of the movement and meaning of temporal historical existence.

Heidegger's wielding of the destructive question is in fact not a phenomenological paying of attention, a way of gaining sharper focus in the description of the phenomenon, rather, it acts as a will to power over the phenomenon, a wresting or rooting up of the phenomenon from its historical-temporal bed, a breaking apart of the phenomenon's inner coherence in order to find what Heidegger regards as the essence (*Wesen*) of the phenomenon. Heidegger refers to this act using a very revealing metaphor: "issuing the phenomenon with its birth certificate" (*Ausstellung des Geburtsbriefes*, SZ 22). This will to power over phenomena sits uneasily with the traditional neo-Kantian expression of the phenomenological method. Heidegger's language is violent; terms like *Ablösung* (loosening out, detaching), *Auflockerung* (loosening up, breaking apart), *Abschüttelung* (shaking off), are frequent. Even stronger terms such as *Nichtigkeit* (for the nothingness of the past) occur. The very positiveness of destruction, its positing, makes it a part of the overall framework of the positing assertion that Heidegger himself is criticizing. *Destruktion* becomes, despite Heidegger's avowed intention, or perhaps paradoxically because of it, a form of the will to power. In so doing destruction, meant to overcome encrusted tradition, now takes its place in the tradition of technique (*die Technik*). What confirms this interpretation of destruction is Heidegger's reference to the material, inventory, or stock (*Bestand*) of traditional philosophy.⁵⁸ The imagery is of a dusty inventory of traditional concepts that must be broken apart by destruction in order to reveal their still positive life-giving power. The term *Bestand* goes unnoticed here, a word drawn from the everyday, an inessential word. Yet

in *The Question Concerning Technology* (1955) the word reappears as a vital essential word belonging to the very essence of technological enframing or configuring (*Gestell*). Here *Bestand* means the manner in which everything is set aside or standing by to be available for technological exploitation and appropriation. Heidegger says *Bestand* means "something more essential than mere stock . . . it designates nothing less than the way in which everything presences what is wrought upon it by the challenging-revealing. Whatever stands by in the sense of *Bestand* no longer stands over against us as an object (*Gegenstand*)."⁵⁹ What is at stake here has not been noticed by critics. Heidegger is using the term *Bestand* to indicate the stock of philosophy, using a term that will later designate the compartment toward technological exploitation. Philosophy then is something which is available as fodder to the *Gestell* of technology. Destruction, far from releasing philosophy into its essential possibility, is actually participating in a will to power, forcing philosophy to give its essence over to technological appropriation. This is what Heidegger calls challenging (*Herausfordern*): destruction challenges philosophy. Far from being a corrective to Western metaphysics, destruction turns out to be a modernist manipulation of the stock (*Bestand*) of philosophical concepts and stances. Philosophy now belongs to the pure technological essence of metaphysics. The moment of radical questioning has been subsumed (*aufgehoben*) in the will to power. Here Heidegger's language has betrayed him, yet the process of destruction is one that Heidegger evokes with confidence in many of his writings, seemingly unaware of its hidden disruptive force.

Since Derrida's appropriation of the concept of deconstruction, which he acknowledges is a relative of the Heideggerian concept of destruction, too many commentators have accepted that Derrida is simply making use of what is implicit in the Heideggerian conception. Derrida recalls that he himself was surprised by the domination of this word, which for him appeared among other words (*trace, supplément, différance*), and originally involved for him an "oblique, deviant, sometimes directly critical, relationship" with the dominant tradition of structuralism.⁶⁰ For Derrida the term belonged to an "anti-structuralist gesture."

Derrida gives several accounts of deconstruction. One involves a systematic rewriting of a text such that there is an inversion or displacement of its constituting oppositions. For him it is one of a set of strategies, more or less tentatively held, which are capable of being abandoned. But the central question, he says, is that of finding an other to philosophy so that philosophy may question itself.⁶¹ There is much of this meaning in Heidegger. For both, the term implies a certain "necessity." Both Heidegger and Derrida agree on the unavoidability of a radical rethinking of tradition. At times, deconstruction, for Derrida, is a process already at work in language, in texts and in their interface, and the term seems

to overlap with the process of *différance*. More usually, deconstruction is seen as specifically embedded in the history of metaphysics. As Derrida says in his "Letter to a Japanese Friend" (July 10, 1983), the question of deconstruction is "through and through the question of translation, and of the language of concepts, of the conceptual corpus of so-called "western" metaphysics."⁶² In this account, deconstruction is closely related to Heidegger's *Destruktion*. Both link it with a certain closure of metaphysics, with a change of standpoint driven by radical questioning of the tradition, with the demand to find an "other" to the tradition, while still making use of speech and language.

The word *deconstruction* became "necessary" for Derrida in the sense that he says it imposed itself on him.⁶³ Derrida acknowledges the Heideggerian provenance of the word, but says that he found the French "translation," *déconstruction*, in the dictionary, and that he chose it because it had less of the Nietzschean overtones of demolition.⁶⁴ In fact, for Derrida, the French term is primarily grammatical, a disassembly of the parts of a sentence for grammatical purposes. Thus Derrida keeps a linguistic-grammatical meaning as well as what he terms the "mechanical" one (i.e. the opposite of construction). As he says, "these models themselves ought to be submitted to deconstructive questioning."⁶⁵ It is noteworthy that in later texts, such as his essay on apartheid, "Art against Apartheid," Derrida sees deconstruction not simply as an analysis of discourse but as "active interventions that transform contexts."⁶⁶ As is clear from Heidegger's discussion of *Destruktion*, the notion of the transformation of context to renew the mode of access to the phenomenon is central to Heidegger's concept. In all cases, however, Derrida still sees deconstruction as a mode of questioning, indeed the phrase "deconstructive questioning" is recurrent. In more recent years Derrida has himself become uncomfortable with the *arkhē* of the question and has talked about the need for a question of the question that is not itself a question, thus trying to escape the charge of a retreat into transcendental metaphysics. Hence Derrida's recent strategies of the "double yes" or his hints on the proximity of prophecy to deconstruction!⁶⁷ It is interesting, therefore, that the notion of destruction takes on a life of its own as it were, a history, which is itself not other than the general history of concepts. Derrida wonders whether we should speak of an "epoch" of this word destruction. What is problematic here is that the term destruction should be so interwoven with a historical epoch of destruction, one in which Heidegger, through his inability to make use of the negative, is implicated. In Derrida, Heidegger's concept of destruction is not actually deconstructed or turned against itself, rather the same assumptions are retained though the procedure is linked with a relativism or at least with a dissemination of meanings without an original founding meaning (though this meaning is still presumed *sous rature*).

Philosophy must examine its own mode of access to the terrain of

philosophy, a mode of access that since Derrida has become increasingly problematic. If Heidegger called his mode of access "destruction," then what is required of us is a more nuanced examination of the presuppositions involved in such a venture. In this paper, in calling into question the origins of Heidegger's concept of destruction, I have also questioned Heidegger's understanding of history and of philosophy. But there are other fundamental notions to be examined—for example the concepts of necessity, of possibility, of time.

Heidegger makes an interesting and I believe unnoticed remark in *Being and Time*, that Being has its own necessary course, thereby invoking a concept of time against that which was already under examination. How did Heidegger come to this decision (which he never abandons and which in fact, despite his anti-Hegelianism, strengthens in the course of his writings)? What could possibly constrain the appearance of Being into something like necessity? Heidegger does not mean here logical necessity, or even scientific causal necessity, since he regards these as derivative nonprimary modes of speaking. Yet it is not a theological necessity either, since even the appearance of the gods is constrained by the necessity of the openness of the open. In fact, it is a metaphysical concept in Heidegger, one that he himself never analyses and that, along with the concept of possibility, has an unjustified privileged status in his writings.

Of course, Heidegger evokes it as a "Greek" concept of necessity—a regulation of the appearance of what appears. Such a concept of necessity must also be submitted to a destruction. Heidegger always backs off from examining the kinds of necessity that his own concepts of history involve. In fact, the very seeking of "necessity" or necessary structures belongs to the historically conditioned movement of Kantianism which seeks structures behind the seeming arbitrariness of empirical appearance. Similarly, the concept of possibility—especially notions like "essential possibility" or "inner possibility"—must be subjected to a radical critique. Heidegger's essential notions are metaphysical notions that, despite the alleged closure of the tradition, are still the only tool for investigating the nature of reality. Despite his claim to remain always a phenomenologist, there is a need to reread Heidegger's basic claims as metaphysical claims, ones that can be understood from within the broader and healthier notion of competing metaphysical traditions.

The concept of destruction as used by Heidegger is likewise bound to a certain view of history, bound by a certain mode of access, that has not been clarified. Clarification of this concept and of Heidegger's other fundamental concepts is a task that has not been undertaken by Heideggerians in general, but which must be done if we are to obey his own injunction to think with Heidegger against Heidegger.

Notes

1. Adorno frequently attacks Heidegger's method and proposes himself as opposed to method. However Adorno is doing no more than repeating Heidegger's own rhetoric. In *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 84, Adorno says: "Objectively, Heidegger's critique of philosophical tradition comes to run counter to its own promise . . . and so it turns into the reverse of 'destruction.'" Georg Lukács in *The Destruction of Reason*, trans. Peter Palmer (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1981) argues that all phenomenology—but particularly Heidegger's—is involved in an irrational subjectivism and false historical consciousness and hence involves a "destruction" of reason.
2. J. Derrida, "Letter to a Japanese Friend," in *Derrida and Différance*, ed. D. Wood and R. Bernasconi (Warwick: Parousia Press, 1985), pp. 1–8.
3. Of course Heidegger emphasises what will later become deconstructionist dogma, namely that it is primarily texts and not persons who disseminate meaning. Heidegger, however, is ambiguous—his great thinkers Heraclitus, Anaximander, Parmenides are proposed to us not only as a collection of fragmentary texts but also as the ghosts of a former presence who "saw" into the meaning of Being.
4. There is in Heidegger a sense of absolute origin which, of course, is abandoned and indeed ridiculed by Derrida's deconstruction. For Derrida absolute origin is a myth, and seeking it is a kind of nostalgia. Heidegger is less straightforward than Derrida makes him out to be (a sign that we should always be careful when we encounter the proper name of Heidegger in the text of Derrida, as opposed to a Heidegger text whose referential nature may be ascertained). To what is Derrida referring when he invokes the name of Heidegger without a text? For example Derrida's statement in *Of Grammatology* (trans. Gayatri C. Spivak [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976], p. 23.): "one must therefore go by way of the question of being as it is directed by Heidegger and by him alone," (the last my emphasis).
5. See Averroës, *Tahafut al-Tahafut (The Incoherence of Incoherence)* trans. from the Arabic with introduction and notes by Simon Van Den Bergh, 2 vols. (London: Luzac & Co., 1969) 1:xxxii. Volume 1 includes a large portion of Ghazali's *Tahafut al-Falasifa*, trans. Sabih Ahmad Kamali. The original Arabic text is edited by Maurice Bouyges, S.J., *Averroës' Tahafot at Tahafot* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1930).
6. Ghazali's methodology—assuming that Aristotle contains the "essential possibility" of all philosophies, since he has refuted all others—could be compared in interesting ways with that of Heidegger who sees all metaphysics as having been predetermined in its path by the Greeks.
7. At issue here are Aristotle's requirements for a demonstrative science, which are now being turned against the claims of philosophy itself to be science.
8. Ghazali makes use of the views of Philoponus as expressed in his *De aeternitate mundi*. See John Philoponus, *Against Aristotle, on the Eternity of the World*, trans. C. Wildberg (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990).
9. Heidegger refers frequently to *die Herkunft des Denkens*.
10. Nevertheless it is appropriate to inquire whether Heidegger ever sought the historical origins of his own closest philosophical tools, and also to attempt to explain his failure to do so.

11. *Euthydemus*, trans. W. H. D. Rouse, in *Plato: The Collected Dialogues*, ed. E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 386.
12. Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt-Endlichkeit-Einsamkeit*, GA 29–30 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1983), p. 37.
13. Of course, it is an open question whether philosophy as such can be treated as a phenomenon capable of a phenomenological analysis that would give us a view of the essence (*Wesensschau*) of philosophy. Heidegger is guilty of hypostasizing philosophy into an essence, and furthermore sees it as the essence of the revealing (or concealing) of Being.
14. Derrida, Levinas, Irigaray and others all accept too quickly the closure of Western metaphysics and hence the impossibility of novelty or of radical philosophical questioning. The claim that another thinking is required is based on the analysis of the dominant Western form of rationality, which may not be as monolithic as Heidegger and others assume. Hence the absurdity of recent thinkers who have sought a deconstructivist "ethic" as if that demand were somehow nonphilosophic.
15. Translated by William Lovitt as "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead'" in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 53.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
17. *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. J. S. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), p. 250. See also Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1983), pp. 37–87.
18. Or rather informed by the clash between Dilthey and Husserl. See Jeffrey Andrew Barash, *Martin Heidegger and the Problem of Historical Meaning* (Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1988) for an excellent account of Heidegger's relationship to the thought of Rickert and Dilthey. See also Otto Pöggeler, *Martin Heidegger's Path of Thinking*, trans. D. Magurshak and S. Barber (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1989), p. 264.
19. It is clear that Heidegger's problematic owes much more to Hegel's program of absolute knowledge as science than he would admit.
20. Although many commentators have noticed how, in Heidegger's texts, Hegel's name is always associated with a distancing and denial of influence, Heidegger is always insisting that we cannot or ought not to think these concepts dialectically in the Hegelian manner.
21. Although Heidegger did read the primary texts, more work needs to be done on Heidegger's overall schematism of the history of philosophy. Was this influenced by the standard academic histories available in Germany?
22. Martin Heidegger, "Séminaire de Zurich, 6 Novembre 1951," trans. François Fédier, *PO&SIE*, 13 (1980): 52–63. The German original "Zürcher Seminar: Aussprache am 6 November 1951," now available in Martin Heidegger, *Seminare*, GA 15 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1986), pp. 423–39.
23. Published in Karl Löwith, "Les implications politiques de la philosophie de l'existence chez Heidegger," *Les Temps Modernes* 2 (1946): 343–60. See Barash, *Heidegger and the Problem of Historical Meaning*, p. 129, for a discussion of this letter.
24. Heidegger, "Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers' 'Psychologie der Weltanschauungen,'" *Wegmarken*, GA 9 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1978), p. 3.
25. See K. Löwith in P. Wisser, ed., *Martin Heidegger in Gespräch* (Munich: Alber,

- 1970), p. 38. See also Barash, *Heidegger and the Problem of Meaning*, pp. 130–32.
26. H.-G. Gadamer, *Kleine Schriften*, 4 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1967), 3:205. Spengler talks of the attempt to predetermine (*vorauszubestimmen*) history for the first time in *Der Untergang des Abendlandes 2 vols.* (Munich: Beck, 1923), 1:3.
27. Barash, *Heidegger and the Problem of Meaning*, p. 146.
28. In fact Heidegger's understanding of the closure of metaphysics is due to his understanding of philosophy in terms of the great but impossible Hegelian project. Similarly Adorno in his immanent critique is unable to escape Hegel and seeks rather to salvage the negative aspect of the dialectic without its totalizing claim. Why could one not adopt the Platonic approach to an *aporia* and simply start again from another position?
29. Heidegger, "The Idea of Phenomenology," trans. John N. Deely and Joseph A. Novak, *The New Scholasticism* 44 (1970): 325–44.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 340. Heidegger here identifies the phenomenological *Rückführung* with *Reduktion*.
31. Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, GA 24 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1975), translated by Albert Hofstadter as *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 21.
32. Heidegger, *Basic Problems*, p. 22.
33. *Ibid.*
34. This clearly links destruction to the retrieval of original meaning as proposed in the hermeneutics of Schleiermacher.
35. Heidegger, *Basic Problems*, p. 23.
36. See Rodolphe Gasché, "Abbau, Destruktion, Deconstruction," in *The Tain of the Mirror* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 109–20.
37. Gasché (*Ibid.*, p. 111) claims that in *Ideas*, trans. W. R. Boyce-Gibson (New York: Collier-Macmillan, 1972), p. 147, Husserl spoke about "thought destruction" (*gedankliche Destruktion*), but I have not been able to find this passage. It is likely that Husserl's later use of the term in *Experience and Judgment* derives from Heidegger.
38. The Latin term appears to have also evolved the meaning of "refutation" rather quickly.
39. See Gadamer's comments on the term *Kehre* in his *Philosophical Apprenticeships*, trans. R. R. Sullivan (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985).
40. Trans. by William Lovett as *The Question Concerning Technology*, p. 22.
41. Rodolphe Gasché has pointed out Heidegger's use of the term *Zerstörung* in *The Tain of the Mirror*, p. 113.
42. Heidegger, *The Question of Being*, trans. W. Kluback and J. T. Wilde (New Haven, Conn.: College and University Press, 1958), pp. 80–81. See J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. G. Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 19.
43. Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denken* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1969), p. 62. This is, of course, a Hegelian point.
44. Derrida, "The Time of the Thesis: Punctuations," in *Philosophy in France Today*, ed. A. Montefiore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 42.
45. Derrida, "Letter to a Japanese Friend," in Wood and Bernasconi, *Derrida and Différance*, p. 4.

46. Kearney, *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 118.
47. Heidegger, *Basic Problems*, p. 23.
48. *SZ*, (original pagination), p. 37.
49. *SZ*, (original pagination), p. 19.
50. *Ibid.* Heidegger speaks of the way in which ontology has been given a necessary (*notwendig*) historical twisting by the character of *Dasein*.
51. Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. James S. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), p. 248.
52. *SZ*, p. 30 (original edition, p. 22). Why "schlecht" here? How have moral-evaluative terms been introduced into the history of the meaning of being? See *Basic Problems*, p. 222.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 328.
54. *SZ* (original pagination), p. 37.
55. Heidegger uses the terms *Analyse* and *Analytik* for his approach to the traditional formulations of the history of philosophy. How is *Destruktion* related to *Analytik*?
56. *SZ* (original pagination), p. 36.
57. *Basic Problems*, p. 22. The influence of Dilthey is clearly evident in this formulation of the problem.
58. *SZ* (original pagination), p. 22.
59. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, p. 17.
60. See his remarks of June 2, 1980, published in "The Time of a Thesis: Punctuations," pp. 34–50, esp. pp. 41–44. See also *Positions* (Paris: Minuit, 1972), trans. A. Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 59.
61. See Richard Kearney's interview with Derrida in Richard Kearney, *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 108.
62. Derrida, "Letter to a Japanese Friend," pp. 1–8. Here he calls the word an "antistructuralist gesture" (p. 3). See also David Wood, "Beyond Deconstruction," in *Contemporary French Philosophy*, ed. A. Phillips Griffiths (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 175–94.
63. Derrida, "Letter to a Japanese Friend," p. 1.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
66. *Critical Inquiry*, Autumn 1986, p. 168.
67. "It is possible to see deconstruction as being produced in a space where the prophets are not far away. But the prophetic resonances of my questioning reside at the level of a certain rhetorical discourse which is also shared by several other contemporary thinkers." Kearney, *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers*, p. 119.

· 14 ·

NIHILISM AND THE ILLUSION OF NATIONALISM

Randall Havas

A number of years ago, Kurt Fischer argued that the categorical denial of any intrinsic connection between Nietzsche's thinking and National Socialism rests on a misunderstanding of the nature of such connections.¹ In particular, Fischer maintained that if we are going to claim Nietzsche as an important and influential precursor of twentieth-century culture, then we are not going to have obvious grounds for denying him the status of a forerunner of Nazi and other fascist ideologies as well. It is in part our misunderstanding of what it means to be a precursor that prevents us from investigating these connections. One can, for example, be a precursor of such ideologies without being an accessory to them. And these are claims that can be made without committing oneself to essentialism with respect either to the thinker or to his thought.

Fischer's claim is, I take it, a claim about how we are to understand Nietzsche, but in part it is also a claim about how we are to understand the twentieth century. Such a claim commits one to the philosophical task of investigating the very notion of a "precursor." Similarly, I think, the question of the connection or connections between Heidegger's phi-